

BQC - 85 - 057

Date: December 18, 1985

To: Wisconsin Nursing Homes
Wisconsin Nursing Home Associations
All BQC Staff

From: Larry Tainter, Director
Bureau of Quality Compliance

Subject: Hot Water Temperatures/Oxygen Concentrators/Resident Wandering

The purpose of this memo is to discuss the following three concerns:

1. Hot water temperatures at patient use fixtures;
2. Oxygen back-up in the event of an emergency;
3. Review of policies and procedures on resident wandering.

HOT WATER TEMPERATURES

The Bureau of Quality Compliance, in recent surveys, has identified a number of licensed homes in which the hot water at patient use fixtures was exceedingly high. This has resulted in Class "A" deficiencies being cited. The temperature of the hot water in these surveys has varied from 140 degrees Fahrenheit to 170 degrees Fahrenheit.

The code requirements are as follows:

HSS 132.83(7)(a)2.

An adequate supply of hot water for patient use shall be available at all times. Temperature of hot water at plumbing fixtures used by residents shall be automatically regulated by control valves and shall not exceed 110 degrees Fahrenheit (43 degrees C.).

405.1134(3) Fed. Tag F401

Standard: Patient Rooms and Toilet Facilities. Patient rooms are designed and equipped for adequate nursing care. . . . Each room is equipped with or is conveniently located near adequate toilet and bathing facilities.

Federal Interpretive Guideline - Each patient room has handwashing facilities with both hot and cold running water, unless provided in adjacent rooms. The temperature of hot water accessible to patients should comply with state requirements and be automatically regulated by control valves.

442.325(a) Fed. Tag T135

Favorable Environment for Residents - Resident living areas are designed and equipped for the comfort and privacy of the resident. Each room is equipped with or conveniently located near adequate toilet and bathing facilities appropriate in number, size, and design to meet the needs of the resident.

Federal Interpretive Guideline - Each resident room has handwashing facilities with both hot and cold running water, unless provided in adjacent toilet or bathroom facilities. Temperature of hot water should be regulated by automatic control valve to prevent burns to residents with tender sensitive skin.

We are enclosing an article on hot water and its effect on the human skin. We recommend that this be relayed to all the patient care staff and maintenance people in your facility.

We also suggest that in each facility, the maintenance staff review the hot water temperature at patient use fixtures. We suggest that the minimum equipment for control include automatic control valves to ensure 110 degrees Fahrenheit hot water temperature at the patient use fixtures. In systems which do not have a separate supply for the dishwasher and laundry, a booster heater may be used to provide the proper hot water temperature for these purposes.

OXYGEN CONCENTRATORS

It has recently been brought to the Bureau's attention that in at least one instance a facility with residents on oxygen concentrators, not connected to the emergency power system, were not providing a back-up system (e.g. additional oxygen tanks) in the event of a power failure. We suggest that facilities serving residents of this type review their policy on oxygen back-up to ensure that oxygen is available in the event of an emergency such as a power outage.

RESIDENT WANDERING

We are again asking the staff of each facility to review and assess the appropriateness of policies and procedures on residents who may wander. Several unfortunate deaths and injuries occur, especially during the winter months, as a result of residents wandering away from long term care facilities. Please refer to the December 28, 1984 memo to all Wisconsin Nursing Homes and Certified Community Based Residential Facilities which addresses "Resident Wandering." If your copy has been misplaced, you may request one from Judy Brockmiller at (608) 266-8847. We suggest that facilities pay special attention to new residents in the facility who are more likely to wander during their period of adjustment to the facility.

LT:CH:kk 1217

Attachment